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Interlocking action programs were designed to open opportunities for low income, minority groups in a slum area. Today, the majority of residents are impoverished Puerto Rican in-migrants, with a smaller sprinkling of low income Negro, Chinese, Jewish, Italian, and Polish groups.

MFY provides job training and placement for unemployed youth; group social work and organization of the unaffiliated for community action; social services to individuals and families; and special educational programs for children and youth.

The various education provisions cluster around five distinct areas of services, which may be characterized as follows: 1) Curriculum planning and development - the curriculum center is staffed by educators with experience in depressed areas, and also serves as a sounding board and communications agency for the best ideas developed in the local classrooms. Language arts is the main concern. 2) Teacher education - by learning more about family life in these slum areas, teachers will be better able to bridge the gap between home and school. 3) Early education intervention - started in pre-school where it is possible to head off retardation that most often comes early in these slum areas. Some of these children are bi-lingual or non-English speaking. 4) Correction and remediation - most of this correction is located in the slum areas because of the high cost of materials, teachers, and helping services.

Mobilization is attempting to achieve these goals in two ways: first, by improving the quality of remedial instruction; and second, by translating superior remedial instruction into improved classroom teaching.

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MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH IN NEW YORK CITY*

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Mobilization For Youth in New York City encompasses a number of interlocking action programs designed to open opportunities for low income, minority groups in a slum area. The neighborhood it serves is old and famous as the place where immigrant groups have traditionally settled after stepping off the boats at the nearby docks, strangers and often ill-equipped to "make it" in a strange land. Today, the majority of residents are impoverished Puerto Rican in-migrants, with a smaller sprinkling of low income Negro, Chinese, Jewish, Italian, and Polish groups. In order to help these low status people cope with their debilitating life conditions, Mobilization provides job training and placement for unemployed youth, group social work and organization of the unaffiliated for community action, social services to individuals and families, and special educational programs for children and youth. A saturation plan of such wide scope facilitates coordinated and mutually supportive action on behalf of clients in need. Multi-problem families can benefit from multi-faceted services, thus strengthening the impact of the Mobilization agency upon the community. These cooperative programs can also be viewed as separate entities, each carefully designed to do a special job.

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*This paper is based on a presentation at the Educational Conference on School Progress for Delinquency Prevention and Control held in Washington, D.C., on October 30 and 31, sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education.

Among the vital offerings of Mobilization For Youth are its education programs, planned in consultation with the local schools being served: 16 elementary, 5 junior high, and 2 senior high. About a million and a half dollars a year subsidize these programs, which are designed to augment current provisions with experimental services in the designated schools. Specifically, the aim is twofold: First, to provide more instructional and pupil personnel services; second, to test and evaluate new ways of improving the education of slum pupils. Experimentation with new departures is a key element of the program, and although some of the provisions are not entirely novel, they are included because they are not offered in the local area and seem promising enough to deserve further testing. It is hoped thereby, that Mobilization will eventually arrive at new insights into improved educational practices for low income, minority group children.

The various education provisions cluster around five distinct areas of services, which may be characterized as follows:

I Curriculum Planning and Development

Teachers in depressed areas habitually plead for new instructional ideas and help in implementing them. They need materials and techniques particularly appropriate for doing an effective job in slum schools. For this reason, Mobilization has established a Curriculum Center, staffed by educators with considerable experience in depressed areas, and serving both the local schools and the internal curriculum needs of the Mobilization agency. The staff creates, assembles, systematizes, and disseminates curriculum ideas and materials for experimental use with slum children and youth. The Center serves also as an

important sounding board and communications agency for the best ideas developed in the local classrooms.

The materials development corps is an important unit of the Center staff. Its major, though by no means exclusive, area of concern is the language arts. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking take priority attention because they are necessary skills for success in the modern curriculum, and they are often poorly mastered by slum children. Developed thus far at the Center are various kinds of reading matter for Puerto Rican pupils, science lessons containing the same verbal content at different reading levels, special mathematics drill problems for supplementary review, and a social studies unit on life in the local community.

A group of curriculum specialists go into the local schools to implement the use of materials developed at the Curriculum Center. They work with teachers to help convert curriculum ideas into practice. As such, their role in bringing about changes in teacher style, technique, and the use of materials is a crucial one. To further improve classroom instruction, the Center has inaugurated summer workshops for teachers interested in developing new instructional aids that are then tested and disseminated.

In addition, the Center for Programed Instruction has been contracted to serve the Curriculum Center in a variety of ways. It has located and tested self-instruction materials that seem especially promising in slum schools. It has organized workshops for teachers to help them create and make use of programed instruction aids. It has also

developed and tested special tapes designed to improve auditory discrimination skills that are often lacking among children in depressed areas.

Generally, the Curriculum Center is endeavoring to experiment with teaching styles and materials to which lower status pupils can be more responsive. It operates with the understanding that responsiveness is a two-way street and that it is necessary not only for curriculum materials to be adapted to the life styles of slum pupils but that teaching methods must be adapted accordingly.

II Teacher Education

Educators often point to the need for teachers to identify themselves closely with the values and behaviors of low status sub-cultures. It is assumed that by learning more about family life in slum areas, teachers will be able to bridge the gap between their middle class orientations and their pupils' lower class backgrounds, and thus improve the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Such an assumption is difficult to test, partly because it is not easy to bridge the cultural gap. Another problem is that teacher training programs conventionally do not familiarize students with the sights and smells of slum life, much less the so-called "cultural positives" of that environment. Mobilization For Youth is attempting to make up for this deficiency in teachar preparation by offering special services to teachers in training and in service.

Through a special arrangement with cooperating local colleges, selected student teachers assigned to Mobilization schools and planning on career in depressed areas, receive expanded and guided learning opportunities.

In addition to student teaching, they visit the local neighborhood, meet various representatives of minority groups, attend meetings of local organizations, and generally try to learn first-hand the dynamics of community life. The Mobilization Agency affords them a valuable opportunity to see a variety of education and social work services in full operation. By spending time at the Curriculum Center, the Mobilization Reading Clinics and at the Mobilization Laboratory Schools (one elementary and one junior high), they are exposed to several experimental educational projects in action. To further augment their student teaching experiences, they are exposed to after-school workshops run by master teachers of the area who enhance their practical know-how of classroom instruction in depressed areas. Finally, the various social work programs at Mobilization involve them as observers and participants in order that they may view family and community life from perspectives other than the classroom.

This pre-service program is tied in with a laboratory school project conducted by Mobilization. The Coordinator of the Laboratory School Program endeavors to attract curricular experimentation to the two designated schools so that new ideas may have an adequate testing ground and teachers in training can view them close-up in a "natural" setting.

The training of in-service teachers is likewise rich and varied. One of the serious problems to be dealt with is the high rate of teacher turnover, which reduces the quality of education in the local community and has a demoralizing effect on the schools. To help offset this turnover problem, Mobilization has offered special help to beginning

teachers with classroom techniques that are of immediate, practical importance in making classroom life more manageable. It is hoped that by helping beginning teachers overcome some serious difficulties in their first year's experience, more of them will stay on for long careers rather than drop out soon after early defeat.

The more seasoned teachers also need many new insights and experiences. A course on THE HOME AND FAMILY is among several designed to do just that, Under the guidance of trained social workers, teachers visit the homes of each pupil in their classes and meet in a series of seminar sessions to analyze and draw educational implications from these visits. Thus, teachers are helped to reduce the social distance between the family and the school. They are trained by the social workers to interpret more keenly the living conditions they see in the home. They bring to the family valuable information about school that can benefit the child. Out of such a face-to-face encounter, there will emerge many important new ideas about how to reach the child more successfully in the educative process. For their part, parents will hopefully feel freer to participate in school activity more regularly, not just during stress periods in their childrens' life.

A companion course to HOME AND FAMILY is one entitled THE LOWER EAST SIDE COMMUNITY. As the title implies, it was designed to provide teachers with a firsthand encounter with the many sub-cultures, languages, and traditions of the community served by Mobilization. A series of lectures, seminars and field trips are coordinated toward this end. Teachers visit with minority groups and agencies and examine various community organizations working to upgrade social conditions in the community. For

most teachers, this constitutes the first contact they have had with the life of the community in which they have been teaching for many years. What they see for themselves in the neighborhood is no less an eye opener than are visits to the homes of their pupils. One cannot over-estimate the extent to which teachers are isolated from life in the home and neighborhood that exerts such a powerful influence on the development of their pupils. There is so much that can be learned from a systematic investigation of the child's environment outside of school that it ought to become part of every teacher's training experience.

Some of the other in-service courses have self-evident value for teachers in depressed areas. Course titles include, A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO, TEACHING THE PUERTO RICAN CHILD, PROGRAMED INSTRUCTION IN THE THREE R'S, LANGUAGE ARTS ENRICHMENT IN THE KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY GRADES and TECHNIQUES IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT.

III Early Educational Intervention

Following the lead of research done by Martin Deutsch in New York and Fred Strodtbeck in Chicago, Mobilization is convinced of the need to provide enrichment in the early grades in the hope of heading off later retardation. Improved language readiness is the major concern of this program. It takes into account the experiential impoverishment of slum children, their lack of familiarity with verbal concepts prerequisite to school success, and their limited exposure to the world of books.

In order to facilitate improvement, 2 preschool, 20 kindergarten, and 20 first grade classes have been designated for intensive enrichment. The teachers receive special training and supplementary instructional materials. They are closely supervised and aided in developing language

experiences appropriate for young children, many of whom are bilingual or non-English speaking. The effects of these special efforts in the early school years on pupil achievement in later grades will be closely evaluated.

Some children begin to show signs of serious learning difficulty as early as the first grade. Teachers feel they can locate those who will some day be referred for special help to guidance counselors or reading clinics. Mobilization is therefore attempting to experiment with such services as early as possible. The elementary Reading Clinic is working with a special group of first graders, identified as potential severe retardates in reading. Special programed instruction material is being used to help accelerate mastery of basic reading skills, and the reading clinicians who work with these children are readying other kinds of materials for possible later use.

Guidance counselors in the elementary schools are also participating in early intervention efforts developed by Mobilization. Some of the primary graders with learning difficulties need the supportive efforts of guidance specialists who meet with them singly and in groups and maintain close liaison with the home.

This concentration of services at the early childhood level may reduce the need for correctional services in the later school years. If so, new insights will emerge as to how the educational dollar ought best be spent to reduce failure and frustration in slum schools.

IV Correction and Remediation

In recent years, education costs have risen steadily and sharply. This

is reflected in every aspect of school life, including classroom instruction, administration and supervision, facilities and materials, and pupil personnel services. If one compares the increasing costs for classroom instruction with those for remedial and other helping services, an interesting impression takes shape. It becomes clear that the outlay for correctional help of various kinds shows a much steeper incline than that for classroom teaching. Moreover, in New York City at least, correctional services are more heavily concentrated in slum schools than elsewhere.

Educators look forward to the day when it will be possible to reduce the need for non-classroom supplementary aid. Mobilization is attempting to help achieve that goal in two ways: First, by improving the quality of remedial instruction; and second, by translating superior remedial instruction into improved classroom teaching.

With retardation so widespread and severe in slum schools, no realistic amount of correctional services can adequately solve the problem. Those who need the extra help unfortunately constitute a large proportion of pupils in these schools, and traditionally, extra-class help has been designed to accommodate only a small fraction of school children. Moreover, some of the approaches to remediation that may be appropriate in middle class schools often fail in depressed areas. This suggests the need to develop special know-how in working with slum pupils who require additional help. It also means that this know-how has to be incorporated into the teaching pattern in the regular classroom, so that the great numbers of such children can be reached.

Several correctional programs at Mobilization deal with problems of

reading retardation. Mobilization has sent into the sixteen elementary schools nine extra reading specialists, each of whom works with four groups of twelve pupils moderately deficient in reading. Their job goes beyond simply servicing children needing help. An important aspect of their work is the development of special skills and materials to be tested with the remedial groups and eventually fed into the regular classroom. The reading specialist becomes, then, a teacher trainer whose ultimate aim is to improve classroom instruction by applying the know-how gained in trial and error with relatively small groups.

Mobilization has also opened two reading clinics, one for elementary and the other for junior high school children. Both clinics are experimenting with various approaches to remediation for severely retarded readers. They are offering a series of carefully designed workshops for parents, to help parents help their children in reading. The guided experiences are clear, simple, and practical, all aimed at capitalizing on the parents' time and interest in coaching their children. Several alternatives are being tested to determine the most effective ways of attracting good attendance at these parent workshops. If the service proves successful in upgrading children's reading, it will be disseminated widely so that similar programs may be undertaken by regular classroom teachers.

Intensive work with potential retardates in the first grade is being attempted in the Mobilization elementary clinic. Customarily, reading clinic services of the New York City school system are not open to pupils below the middle grades. Mobilization is therefore testing the

effects of early identification and intervention in the hope of forestalling later problems. Various kinds of instructional aids and techniques that seem promising for young children in depressed areas will receive close scrutiny before recommendations are made for their wider use. Like most of the other experimental work done in the reading clinics, rigorous evaluation will be applied to determine the promise of these new services.

One gratifying outcome of clinic services is the willingness of slum children to attend regularly even when attendance is not compulsory. The clinic is open during the summer months to pupils recommended by the local schools and by various divisions within Mobilization. The schedule for the summer is identical with that for the school months. Each child receives instruction in two one-hour sessions per week on a small group or individual basis. Social work and psychological services are housed in the clinics to complement the work done by reading specialists, and these facilitate intensive casework and research in the remedial reading program.

Further tutorial services to school children are offered in the homework helper program. Some 240 high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors, themselves coming from low-income, minority group families, coach fourth and fifth graders after school hours. Every tutor spends four afternoons per week in the program, one in seminars where he receives training in teaching skills from master teachers, and the other three working with the elementary school children. Some tutors coach three pupils, once a week, each in two-hour sessions, while others work with two pupils, one twice a week and the other once a week. The relative

effects of the single vs. double dose of tutoring will be carefully evaluated.

The master teachers play an important role in the program. In addition to training the tutors in instructional skills, they supervise the tutors on the job. They keep records, arrange for tutoring facilities, select teaching material, and are generally responsible for the smooth functioning of the program. If these responsibilities were not carefully coordinated, the program could not function as effectively as it does.

To some extent, "homework help" is a misnomer in this program. Not all children receive assignments from school nor can a tutor be too helpful with homework in a once-(or twice)-a-week coaching session. Activities are therefore focused on reading skills, where the need for help is greatest. Tutors have been instructed to lead their pupils into reading activities, either directly through specially prepared exercises, or indirectly through activities in science, mathematics, social studies, educational games, and special projects. Sometimes homework assignments serve as vehicles for teaching study skills. Reading instruction is also centered around skill stations where children can receive special help in fundamentals that are tailor made to the pupil's specific deficiency, as revealed by diagnostic tests. The tutors have been trained to operate particular stations and to lend support and encouragement to the pupils.

Although evaluation of the program will take time to complete, preliminary impressions are encouraging. Pupil attendance is far better than expected, despite the fact that it is voluntary. There are waiting

lists of children seeking to get into the program, and parents reinforce demands for the service. Tutors share the enthusiasm of those who have observed the program in action. If it proves successful, the possibilities of utilizing high school youth to help upgrade educational provisions in slum areas will be virtually limitless, with benefits accruing both to the tutored and the turors.

For the school dropout, Mobilization is offering educational guidance and tutoring. Adolescents entering the Mobilization work programs, the coffee shop, or the reintegration project are often poorly prepared to gain a social or economic footing in an urban environment. Some need direction in picking up the threads of their formal schooling; others who can't or won't return to school need considerable help in communication skills. Functional illiteracy, problems with English as a second language, and deficiency in language and mathematics skills needed on the job are the most critical handicaps the program is designed to help overcome. Various approaches are being tried to guarantee regular attendance and to provide meaningful learning activity for these older adolescents. The task is a most difficult one, principally because so few existing instructional aids are appropriate for the varied needs of this group, and there is no assurance of contact with the youngsters for a long enough period to allow for ample instruction time. But if the program proves successful its value may well be limitless.

V Pupil Personnel Services

One of the important services for children in slum schools is rendered by guidance counselors. Their work in the elementary and junior high schools is designed to help provide the necessary ego support for those

who are having difficulty in class. The service usually takes on many forms, different for each school, with the counselor ranging wide in her contacts on behalf of the child. She may work with parents, local social agencies, and other pupil personnel services at school as a catalyst coordinating many helping efforts with her own.

Mobilization has provided the local schools with fourteen additional counselors to increase regular services and to develop new ones. Their value as liaison personnel between Mobilization and the schools has been particularly noteworthy. They play a key role in selecting pupils for the homework helper program, arranging for their participation, and following up with pupils, parents, and teachers in order to sustain interest in the program. In addition, they have coordinated all school referrals to Mobilization of families in need of various social services.

In an effort to test new guidance functions in the school, the counselors are currently involved in various instructional programs and experimenting with several counseling techniques. Primary grade children showing signs of early school failure are targets for intensive service in the counselor's office to help strengthen their motivation and ability to achieve better in class. The extra encouragement and skill training can be crucial at these beginning stages of the child's schooling. Furthermore, by bringing parents into the picture at this time, the guidance counselor is in a good position to forestall later problems between home and school. This is part of the general effort at early intervention which Mobilization is endeavoring to intensify in the local schools.

Group guidance is also being tried in the hope of reaching more children

in need of help. Some of these groups engage in carefully planned play activity to open new means of communication and role identification.

Counselors are concentrating on problems of scholastic underachievement in the early and middle grades. They feel that many children have the ability to do outstanding work if they are given extra attention outside the classroom. Relatively little experimental work has been done with underachievers in the elementary grades despite the fact that adolescent underachievers seem to benefit little from special counseling or remediation. Perhaps the efforts with younger children will prove more effective.

One common denominator for the various experimental guidance programs is an effort to broaden the counselor's perspectives so that services are not restricted to "hard core" groups in the schools.

To lend needed support to the guidance counselor's work in the junior high school, Mobilization has assigned an attendance teacher to each of the five junior high schools in the area. His being housed in the school enables him to provide on-the-spot service and continuous follow-up with absentee pupils. Truancy and absence prevention are the major foci of this program. The attendance teachers are charged with the responsibility of identifying youngsters who are habitually truant and those exhibiting a variety of absence patterns that reflect the early symptoms of truancy. They work directly with the youngsters and parents as well as with the teachers and guidance counselors in an effort to minimize various problems that contribute to truancy. They have also developed an educational program in each school to increase "attendance consciousness" on the part of teachers and pupils, emphasizing the

relationship between regular attendance and school achievement.

In conclusion: Mobilization For Youth is operating on the hope that alternatives for improving education in slum areas can yet be demonstrated It is groping for answers to long standing, unsolved problems by emphasizing innovation and research wherever possible. What has started out as educated guesswork may turn out to be exercises in futility in some Mobilization programs and demonstrated success in others. There has been so much failure in slum schools that it is unrealistic to expect appreciable improvement by providing more of the same services currently available in these schools. There does not seem to be much more value in mining the same educational lode. New explorations are needed desparately, or else schools will have to admit ineptitude for the present and promise nothing better for the future. So much is at stake in the education of children in depressed areas that any salutary outcomes of the Mobilization experiment will be well worth its public support.